

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAROL CONNOLLY, POET LAUREATE OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of an extraordinary woman, Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota. Carol passed away on November 23rd at the age of 85.

Carol lived her entire life to the fullest in her beloved hometown of Saint Paul, and there was no greater joy than her family, raising 7 children and nurturing 15 grandchildren and great grandchildren. In addition to being the heart of a large, loving family, she was active as a catalyst, connector and collaborator for her dynamic community. One of her dear friends aptly observed that “all roads to and from Saint Paul lead through Carol Connolly.” Inspired by the peace and civil rights movements, she was busy throughout her life volunteering for countless organizations, causes and candidates, not to mention running for political office herself. She truly became the change for good that she wanted to see in the world.

Her artistic side shined just as bright, writing and publishing countless poems, plays and columns—and mentoring new writers along the way. At the 2006 ceremony where she was named Poet Laureate, she read one of her poems that captures the essence of this great American city where “neighborhoods are the foundation of our freedom, “ a place where, regardless of background, neighbors care for neighbors and the greatest strength is found in coming together: “A storm thunders along the river as it roams through the city, home to some of us for 2,000 years. Home to others of us who left our native lands to escape famine, or war, or worse, and we are all immigrants.”

Carol's boundless generosity and care for others touched the lives of so many—from her family and friends to strangers. Through her poetry, humor, advocacy and contagious enthusiasm and support for the arts and art makers in our community, she was determined to make the world a better place, and she did. Above all, she was a devoted and beloved mother and grandmother, sister and aunt. It was always clear how deeply she valued the lives of people around her.

It was an honor to call Carol a friend and a neighbor for many years. Her selfless encouragement of others, especially of writers and women running for office, continues to inspire me and so many others throughout our community.

Madam Speaker, please join me in celebrating the outstanding life of Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395, WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address section 1242 of William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021, Clarification and Expansion of Sanctions relating to Construction of Nord Stream 2 or TurkStream Projects.

On July 20th of this year during House consideration of this bill, I rose in opposition to the amendment that added this provision to the NDAA, which targeted the Nord Stream 2 project with additional sanctions. I was concerned that these sanctions would target the wrong entities. Rather than deterring Russia and Putin, I was worried that it would be used to target European or American companies.

Fortunately, through the conference process, in which I was a conferee as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we were able to improve on the language that passed the initial House and Senate bills. The conferees decided to include an exception for certain governments and governmental entities. This change was an important and appropriate fix to ensure our allies and partners would not be targeted by sanctions under this provision.

As a conferee on this provision, I want to make clear that the term “government” means any level of government in those countries, including local and municipal governmental entities or authorities, and the term “business enterprise” does not include any entity that performs any public functions or otherwise has any public responsibilities.

I also want to commend my fellow conferees for agreeing to expand and include new language requiring, before the imposition of any sanctions pursuant to this provision, consultations by the Secretary of State with the governments of Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and member countries of the European Union. It is imperative that these consultations are true exchanges of views with the governments described, including EU member countries and institutions, conducted well before any sanctions would be imposed. The consultations must be deliberative and meaningful, and should take place at the Foreign Minister level or higher. Simple notification of a determination to proceed with the imposition of sanctions is not a consultation and would not fulfil the requirements of section 1242.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to my House and Senate colleagues for working with me to make sure this extremely difficult issue is handled with precision. In this revised provision, I think we got much closer to that goal.

BENEFICIARY ENROLLMENT NOTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2020

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2477, BENES Act of 2020, which has been amended to include H.R. 5534, the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act. I advanced both bipartisan bills through my Health Subcommittee and I'm proud to support them on the Floor today.

The BENES Act introduced updates the Part B enrollment process for the first time in 50 years. It requires Medicare to notify people nearing eligibility about their rights and responsibilities, protecting beneficiaries from a lifetime of financial penalties for failure to enroll promptly.

While most beneficiaries are still automatically enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B at age 65 because they're receiving Social Security benefits, a growing number of Americans are not.

In 2016, only 60 percent of Medicare-eligible 65-year-olds were taking Social Security, compared to 92 percent in 2002.

The federal government provides virtually no notification to people who are nearing Medicare eligibility about their responsibilities, including if they must actively enroll.

If you do not enroll in Part B at age 65, then you are required to pay a Part B Late Enrollment Penalty that accrues at 10 percent of the current Part B premium for every year a person should have been—but was not—enrolled in Part B.

The BENES Act requires the federal government to notify people nearing Medicare eligibility about their rights and responsibilities.

The BENES Act also allows coverage to begin more quickly post-enrollment, with Medicare coverage beginning on the first of the month or the first of the following month when a person enrolls.

The BENES Act has been championed by the Medicare Rights Center and over 70 other organizations dedicated to helping Medicare beneficiaries. I'm proud that the House is finally taking this much needed vote and I look forward to this important bill being passed by the Senate and signed into law.

As part of this bill, the House will also pass the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act, championed by Representatives KIND and BURGESS for many years. I'm proud to be an original sponsor of this commonsense policy that will save money and, more importantly, lives.

Today, while Medicare covers a lifetime of dialysis, but kidney transplant recipients currently lose their Medicare coverage 36 months after transplant. Without Medicare coverage for needed immunosuppressive drugs, transplant patients risk losing their new kidney. This legislation closes that gap by continuing coverage for kidney transplant recipients which a nonpartisan HHS analysis found would save 375 kidney transplants each year.

Like the BENES Act, advocates have been fighting for this immunosuppressive coverage